

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY MANAGEMENT COMMISSION

MINUTES

A meeting of the House of Assembly Management Commission was held in the Committee Room of One Government Place on Wednesday, May 24, 2023, at noon.

Present were: Hon. Keith Bain, Chair, Nolan Young, Hon. Kim Masland, Hon. Allan MacMaster, Danielle Barkhouse, Hon. Derek Mombourquette, Fred Tilley (substituting for Hon. Keith Irving), Susan Leblanc and James Charlton, Chief Clerk and Secretary to the Management Commission.

Also present were Matthew Timmons, Director of Operations and Administration, Gordon D. Hebb, KC, Chief Legislative Counsel, and David Hastings, Assistant Clerk

The meeting was called to order by Mr. Bain at 12:01 p.m.

1) Minutes of January 25, 2023, meeting

It was moved by Mr. MacMaster and seconded by Mr. Mombourquette that the minutes of the January 25, 2023, meeting be approved as circulated.

CARRIED

2) 2022-2023 Audit Report

The Chief Clerk noted that the 2022-2023 Audit Report was presented to the Audit Committee on May 17, 2023, and reviewed the opinions set out therein.

It was moved by Mr. Young and seconded by Mr. Tilley that the 2022-2023 Audit Report be accepted by the Management Commission as presented by the Chief Clerk.

CARRIED

3) Amendments to Directive and Regulations

(a) Directive amendment re limitations on cost of appliances and purchase of coffee makers and coffee

The Chief Clerk reviewed a proposed amendment to House of Assembly Management Commission Directive No. 1 to remove the distinction between the amounts that may be claimed for small and larger appliances purchased for use in constituency offices and setting a uniform \$400 maximum for all such claims. The proposed amendment more explicitly authorized the

purchase of appliances reasonably suitable for a constituency office and removed language that limited the purchase of coffee makers to drip coffee makers (and by implication, the purchase of coffee to coffee from drip coffee makers). This would have the effect of permitting the purchase of single-serve coffee makers and coffee pods.

It was moved by Ms. Leblanc and seconded by Ms. Barkhouse that that House of Assembly Management Commission Directive No. 1 be amended by striking out the final two bullet points and substituting “- appliances not exceeding \$400 in cost that are reasonably suitable for a constituency office, including a kettle, coffee maker, toaster oven, mini-fridge, microwave, heater, dehumidifier, water cooler and vacuum”.

CARRIED

(b) Amendment to clause 21(1)(ja) of the Regulations re annual amount claimable for constituency open houses

The Chief Clerk reviewed a proposed amendment to clause 21(1)(ja) of the House of Assembly Management Commission Regulations to increase to \$1,000 the total amount that a member may claim towards the cost of staging not more than four constituency open houses, not including the cost of advertising the open houses.

It was moved by Mr. Mombourquette and seconded by Ms. Masland that the proposed amendment to clause 21(1)(ja) of the *House of Assembly Management Commission Regulations* be approved.

CARRIED

(c) Amendment to subsection 21(1) of the Regulations re safety equipment

The Chief Clerk reviewed a proposed amendment to clause 21(1) of the *House of Assembly Management Commission Regulations* to authorize claims by a member for safety boots, a hard hat, a reflective vest, eye protection and any other personal protective equipment that is reasonably necessary or advisable for the personal use of the member on visiting construction or work sites.

It was moved by Mr. Tilley and seconded by Ms. Leblanc that the proposed amendment to clause 21(1) of the *House of Assembly Management Commission Regulations* be approved.

CARRIED

4) Centralizing member IT hardware

The Chief Clerk reviewed a briefing note on the subject of having the Department of Cyber Security and Digital Solutions provide members with standardized and secure devices (telephones and computers) rather than having members purchasing their own hardware. The Chief Clerk

requested that the House Leaders present the briefing note to their respective caucuses for comment.

A discussion ensued with Messrs. Mombourquette and Tilley, Ms. Masland, Messrs. MacMaster and Young, Mses. Barkhouse and Leblanc and the Chief Clerk participating.

5) Annual CPI adjustment

The Director of Operations and Administrations advised that, pursuant to subsection 52(1) of the *House of Assembly Management Commission Regulations*, the fixed amounts set out in the regulations (with limited exceptions) are increased on April 1st of each year by the increase in the Consumer Price Index (CPI) for Nova Scotia or the core CPI for Canada, whichever is lower. This increase is subject to the approval of the Management Commission. The CPI for Nova Scotia for the 2022-2023 fiscal year was 4.5% while the CPI for Canada for the same period was 4.4%. The Director advised that the 4.4% increase would amount to a budget increase of approximately \$195,000 across all members.

Following a pause to review a spreadsheet illustrating the budgetary effects of the increase, a discussion ensued with Ms. Barkhouse, the Chief Clerk, Ms. Leblanc, Mr. Tilley and the Director participating.

The Chair noted a lack of interest among the members of the Management Commission in proceeding with a motion to either approve or reject the increase and accordingly deferred consideration of the matter to a future meeting of the Management Commission.

6) Delegation to Chair of authority of Management Commission to determine salaries of officers of the House appointed by order in council

The Management Commission met *in camera* to discuss this matter. Following the *in camera* discussion, the Chair reported pursuant to subsection 9(2) of the *House of Assembly Management Commission Act* as follows:

It was moved by Ms. Leblanc and seconded by Mr. Mombourquette that, for any officers of the House the salaries of whom the Management Commission is by order in council assigned authority to determine from time to time, such authority be delegated to the Chair of the Management Commission under subsection 12(1) of the *House of Assembly Management Commission Act*.

CARRIED

7) 2022-2023 Financial Reports – 1st, 2nd and 3rd quarter and preliminary year-end reports

The Director of Operations and Administration noted that the reports had been circulated and reviewed the 2022-2023 preliminary year-end report with its projected surplus of \$1.18 million.

The agenda being concluded, the meeting adjourned at 12:53 p.m.

Certified



James Charlton
Chief Clerk and Secretary to the House of Assembly Management Commission